

House Republican Press Release

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House Passes Legislation To Jail People Repeatedly Driving with a Suspended License



DelGobbo, Labriola Introduced Bill after Naugatuck Constituent Lost Son to Repeat Offender

The state House of Representatives today passed and sent to the Senate a measure originally proposed by Rep. Kevin M. DelGobbo, R-70th, and David Labriola, R-131st, to jail people who repeatedly drive while their license is suspended.

Rep. DelGobbo said the issue came to light after Naugatuck constituent Manuel Mateus lost a son, Jon Mateus, in a fatal 2004 accident in Seymour involving a driver who had been stopped 10 times for operating a vehicle with a suspended license. Manuel Mateus had testified at the Capitol in favor of the bill.

“At least something good will come out of this tragedy,” Rep. DelGobbo said, “The statistics show a huge correlation between a large number of accidents and driving under suspended licenses. This legislation addresses that major problem and should improve the safety of the motoring public.”

“When we hear of tragic incidents happening under these circumstances, it is absolutely outrageous,” said Rep. DelGobbo. “When drivers so blatantly and willfully ignore the law, they should suffer some real penalty and not be permitted to keep endangering others on the highways.”

Rep. Labriola added, “There was an awful tragedy that was an inspiration for this bill. Jon Mateus was killed by a driver who had his license suspended and still drove repeatedly. Right now, the law provides for a jail sentence of up to a year in jail plus a fine, but the sentence is discretionary. This legislation will make jail time mandatory after a third offense of driving with a suspended license. This is a common sense approach to a very serious and deadly problem facing our state.”

The legislation, HB 6882, provides for a mandatory \$500 fine or 100 hours of community service upon the second offense, and a term of 90 days in jail for a third violation, said Rep. Labriola.

The House approved the measure unanimously by a vote of 146-0.

Reps. DelGobbo and Labriola serve the 70th and 131st Districts of Naugatuck in the state House of Representatives.